

Message Text

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HEW-04 PC-01 DLOS-09 /182 W
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R 240529Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5420
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: MNUC, OCLR, PINT, ENRG, EFIN, EAID, EFIS, ETRN,
- EWWT, PFOR, DPID

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S BIENNIAL VISIT TO TONGA

REF: (A) STATE 065449, (B) WELLINGTON 01945

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY: FROM APRIL 8 TO APRIL 12,
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I MADE MY BIENNIAL VISIT TO TONGA, ACCOMPANIED BY
MRS. SELDEN AND THE EMBASSY POLCONS. THIS REPORT SUM-
MARIZES MY FINDINGS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS. ADDITIONAL
REPORTS CONTAINING GREATER DETAIL AND REQUESTING SPECIFIC
ACTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT, AID, AND THE NAVY FOLLOW.
END SUMMARY. END UNCLASSIFIED. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL
USE.

1. NPW VISITS (LOU)

- THE PRINCIPAL TOPIC OF MY HOUR-LONG AUDIENCE WITH KING TAUFU'AHAU TOPOU IV WAS COVERED IN JUST A FEW MINUTES. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD ANY OBJECTIONS TO A VISIT BY AN NPW. THE KING REPLIED, "NONE, JUST SO THEY DON'T DISCHARGE ANY NUCLEAR WASTES INTO OUR HARBOR." I THEN OFFERED TO SEND MY NAVAL ATTACHE TO TONGA TO EXPLAIN THE VARIOUS ASSURANCES UNDER THE STANDARD STATEMENT AND THE LIABILITY ASPECTS OF SUCH A VISIT UNDER THE HOSMER RESOLUTION AND HE ACCEPTED. LATER, I ALSO RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH PRIMIN, PRINCE TU'IPELEHAKE, AND WITH THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT, TANIELA TUFUI. BOTH READILY INDICATED THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM WITH AN NPW VISIT.

- IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM, I WILL BE SUBMITTING RECOMMENDATIONS ON NPW VISITS TO TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA.

2. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS (LOU)

- DURING MY VISIT, CAMPAIGNING BY FORTY CANDIDATES WAS UNDERWAY FOR THE SEVEN "PEOPLES' REPRESENTATIVES" SEATS IN THE UNICAMERAL TONGAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. THREE CANDIDATES WERE TO BE ELECTED FROM THE TONGATAPU ISLAND GROUP AND TWO EACH FROM THE HA'APAI AND VAVAU GROUPS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS ON APRIL 14. SINCE THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PARTIES IN TONGA, ALL OF THE CANDIDATES CAMPAIGNED AS INDEPENDENTS.

- FOR THE FIRST TIME, I NOTED SIGNS DURING THIS VISIT OF THE EMERGENCE OF EMBRYONIC POLITICAL GROUPINGS. A HANDFUL OF INDIVIDUALS FAVORING REFORM OF TONGA'S HIGHLY TRADITIONAL SYSTEM IS BEGINNING TO COALESCE. I WOULD STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT THEY ARE REFORMIST RATHER THAN RADICAL IN OUTLOOK AND SO FAR EXCEEDINGLY FEW IN NUMBER. THOUGH THERE WERE "REFORMISTS" AMONG THE FORTY CANDIDATES, THERE WAS NO REAL THREAT TO TRADITIONAL RULE AS THE REMAINING 14 SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ARE CONSTITUTIONALLY ALLOTTED TO THE NOBLES AND CABINET MINISTERS.

- WHILE TRANSITING TONGA ON APRIL 15, I LEARNED THAT THE TONGATAPU AND VAVAU ISLAND GROUPS HAD RETURNED FOUR "CONSERVATIVE" (MEANING TRADITION-ORIENTED) INCUMBENTS AND ELECTED A FIFTH CONSERVATIVE TO A VACATED SEAT IN THE ASSEMBLY. RESULTS FROM THE DISASTER-STRUCK HA'APAI ISLAND GROUP ARE STILL AWAITED.

3. OIL EXPLORATION (LOU)

- DURING MY VISIT, WEBB TONGA ANNOUNCED THAT THE MALAPO DRILLING SITE IN THE CENTER OF TONGATAPU ISLAND HAD BEEN ABANDONED AS "DRY." DRILLING WENT TO ABOUT 8000 FEET INTO A DOME WHICH HAD LOOKED PROMISING FROM SEISMIC DATA. WEBB TONGA'S LOCAL MANAGER, CARL RIECHELMANN, SAID THE DRILLING RIG WAS NOW BEING TRANSFERRED TO A SECOND SITE NEAR FUA'AMOTU AND THE SPUDDING-IN WAS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE ABOUT MID-APRIL. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA ON THE FUA'AMOTU SITE, WITH ONE OF WEBB TONGA'S AMERICAN PARTNERS CONTENDING THAT IT SHARES THE SAME UNPRODUCTIVE GEOLOGIC STRUCTURE AS THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MALAPO SITE. A PLANNED THIRD DRILLING SITE IS WITHIN THE CAPITAL TOWN OF NUKU'ALOFA. THE KING, ALWAYS OPTI-

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MISTIC, TOLD ME THAT IF THEY DID NOT STRIKE OIL AT THE SECOND DRILLING SITE, HE WAS SURE THEY WOULD AT THE NUKU'ALOFA SITE.

4. KING'S VISIT TO THE U.S. (LOU)

- IN REF A, WE WERE INFORMED THAT RENO LAWYER, JACK STREETER, HAD TELEPHONED EA/ANP TO SAY THAT THE KING AND QUEEN OF TONGA HAD ACCEPTED HIS INVITATION TO VISIT HIM IN NEVADA "IN ABOUT 30 DAYS." I CHECKED ON THIS REPORT
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AND WAS TOLD THAT IF THE VISIT OCCURRED AT ALL, IT WOULD BE IN JULY OR AUGUST. TONGAN OFFICIALS PROMISED TO INFORM US SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE SO THAT APPROPRIATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE.

5. BANK OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (LOU)

- DURING MY AUDIENCE WITH THE KING, I INQUIRED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE BANK. HE RESPONDED THAT EVERYTHING WAS "FINE" AND THAT THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE AIRPORT RUNWAY "IS ON THE WATER." I LEARNED LATER, HOWEVER, THAT THE KING HAD INFORMED JOHN MEIER AND HIS VANCOUVER-BASED PARTNERS THAT THE BANK'S ALL-EMBRACING CHARTER WILL NOT BE CONFIRMED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, WHICH MEETS IN JUNE, UNLESS SOME TANGIBLE BENEFITS BEGIN TO FLOW TO TONGA. IT WAS IN RESPONSE TO THIS PRESSURE THAT MEIER REPLIED WITH ASSURANCES THAT THE AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT IS ON ITS WAY. THE KING, WHO IS NOW WELL AWARE OF MEIER'S QUESTIONABLE BACKGROUND, IS CLINGING TO THE HOPE THAT SOME BENEFIT FOR HIS KINGDOM CAN STILL BE WRUNG FROM THE BANK. HIS BASIC MOTIVATION IN THIS IS HIS BELIEF THAT ONLY OVER-NIGHT DEVELOPMENT WILL SOLVE TONGA'S GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, WHICH HE, IN TURN, SEES AS A THREAT TO TRADITIONAL RULE. IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM, I WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT.

6. SHIPPING (LOU)

- KING TAUFU'AHAU TUPOU IV IS APPARENTLY PREPARING TO SHIFT TONGA'S GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FROM PACIFIC NAVIGATION

OF TONGA TO A NEW ORGANIZATION, THE SHIPPING CORPORATION
OF POLYNESIA, IN WHICH THE WEST GERMAN COLUMBUS LINE
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WILL HAVE A 60 PERCENT INTEREST. THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT
WILL HOLD THE OTHER 40 PERCENT. MUCH AS IT DID WITH
WESTERN SAMOA, THE COLUMBUS LINE IS APPARENTLY DANGLING
A SHIP BEFORE THE KING. IF THE SHIP MATERIALIZES, AND
NOTHING IS EXPECTED UNTIL AT LEAST JULY 1979, THE GOT
WOULD USE IT AS ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE PACIFIC FORUM
LINE. IN THE MEANTIME, THE PRIMIN TOLD ME THAT HE IS
ANXIOUS TO KEEP THE PRESENT SERVICE BEING PROVIDED BY
PACIFIC NAVIGATION OF TONGA. P&O, THE J. LAURITZEN GROUP
OF DENMARK, AND SIDNEY BUSINESSMAN ALWYN ELLEM, PARTNERS
WITH THE GOT IN PACIFIC NAVIGATION OF TONGA, ARE OBVIOUSLY
AWARE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS AND FEEL AGGRIEVED BY
THEM. THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY RESURRECTED AN ALMOST BANK-
RUPT SHIPPING SERVICE TO TONGA AND SHOULD NOT NOW BE
DENIED THE BENEFITS OF THEIR EFFORTS.

7. COMMUNIST COUNTRY ACTIVITIES (LOU)

- I QUERIED SEVERAL RELIABLE INFORMANTS ABOUT SOVIET
AND CHINESE RELATIONS WITH TONGA AND WAS TOLD THAT THERE
HAD BEEN NO CHANGES SINCE OUR LAST REPORTS ON THE SUBJECT.
THE KING'S TRIUMPHAL VISIT TO TAIWAN LAST OCTOBER SEEMS
TO HAVE ENDED ANY MOVEMENT TOWARD THE PRC, THOUGH IN
PRINCIPLE HE IS STILL WILLING TO ACCEPT A TWO-CHINA
SOLUTION. WHILE I WAS THERE, I MET SEVERAL TAIWANESE
BUSINESSMEN WHO WERE INVESTIGATING HOTEL AND RESTAURANT
INVESTMENTS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. BEGIN
UNCLASSIFIED.

8. HA'APAI DISASTER RELIEF (UNCLASSIFIED)

- DURING MY VISIT, I RECEIVED A REQUEST FOR DISASTER
ASSISTANCE TO THE HA'APAI ISLAND GROUP. THIS ISLAND GROUP,
ONE OF THREE MAKING UP THE KINGDOM, FIRST SUFFERED A
DROUGHT AND THEN WAS STRUCK BY TROPICAL CYCLONES ANN IN
DECEMBER AND ERNIE IN LATE FEBRUARY. THE EEC, THE UN
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DISASTER RELIEF ORGANIZATION, AUSTRALIA, AND NZ HAVE
ALREADY PROVIDED FOOD AND MONETARY ASSISTANCE. THE U.S.
AND WEST GERMANY ARE NOW BEING REQUESTED TO SUPPLEMENT

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R 240529Z APR 78
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THE OTHER DONORS. BECAUSE THE GOT IS UNABLE TO RAISE
SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER LOCAL COSTS, WE ARE BEING
ASKED FOR \$40,000 TO PROVIDE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF
FOOD AND RELIEF SUPPLIES BY EIGHT CHARTERED VOYAGES TO
THE HA'APAI BETWEEN NOW AND SEPTEMBER. I AM SENDING A
SEPARATE TELEGRAM ON THIS SUBJECT.

9. EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ) DECLARATION
- (UNCLASSIFIED)

- DESPITE TONGA'S COMMITMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM
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TO DECLARE AN EEZ BY APRIL 1, I WAS TOLD BY THE PRIMIN THAT THE GOT DID NOT INTEND TO MAKE A DECLARATION ANYTIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE PRIMIN NOTED THAT THERE IS A "TRADITIONAL" ATTACHMENT TO THE BOUNDARIES DECLARED IN 1887 BY KING GEORGE TOPOU I. KING GEORGE, INCIDENTALLY, WAS WAY AHEAD OF HIS TIME IN DECLARING BOUNDARIES FOR HIS KINGDOM WHICH APPROXIMATE PRESENTADAY 200-MILE EEZ. IF TONGA EVENTUALLY GOES AHEAD WITH AN EEZ DECLARATION, IT WILL BE OBLIGED TO NEGOTIATE MEDIAN LINES WITH FIJI, WESTERN SAMOA, NIUE, FRANCE, AND NEW ZEALAND WHICH WILL ENLARGE ITS TOTAL JURISDICTION SOMEWHAT, BUT WILL ALSO INVOLVE GIVING UP SOME OF ITS 1887 SOVEREIGNTY CLAIM. THE PRIMIN, WITH A SMILE, NOTED THAT MINERVA REEF IS CALLED MINERVA ISLAND BY HIS GOVERNMENT. IN 1972, TONGA LAID CLAIM TO THE TIDE-WASHED REEF SOME 300 MILES SOUTH-WEST OF TONGATAPU ISLAND TO FORESTALL EFFORTS BY A PRIVATE GROUP TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC THERE. A 200 MILES EEZ BASED ON THIS CLAIM WOULD OVER-LAP THE NEW ZEALAND EEZ.

10. FOUNDATION FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (FSP)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAM GRANT (OPG) (UNCLASSIFIED)

- IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM, REF B, I HAVE RAISED CERTAIN QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAM GRANT AGREEMENTS FOR TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA. IN TONGA, IN PARTICULAR, MY CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS LED ME TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE FSP PROPOSALS. I WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION AS REQUESTED IN THE REFTEL BEFORE AID/W GIVES FINAL APPROVAL.

11. ASIA FOUNDATION AGREEMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

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- ON MARCH 21, THE GOT INFORMED THE ASIA FOUNDATION THAT IT HAD APPROVED THE DRAFT AGREEMENT ON THE FOUNDATION'S OPERATIONS IN TONGA, WITH SOME AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE III. THE AMENDMENTS, WHICH RELATE TO PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES, HAVE NOT BEEN ALTERED RADICALLY FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT. THE FOUNDATION WAS INFORMED THAT IF IT AGREED TO THE RE-DRAFTED ARTICLE III, THE GOT WAS WILLING TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT. THE ASIA FOUNDATION WAS ASKED TO REPLY BY RETURN TELEGRAM, HOWEVER, A RESPONSE HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED BY THE TIME OF MY VISIT.

12. DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION (UNCLASSIFIED)

- FIJI'S UNILATERAL ACTION IN APPOINTING SIR JOSUA RABUKAWAQA AS ITS ROVING AMBASSADOR TO ITS SOUTH PACIFIC

NEIGHBORS HAS BEEN SIDE-STEPPED BY THE GOT. ACCORDING TO CROWN PRINCE TUPOUTOA, THE GOT REPLIED TO FIJI'S REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT BY SUGGESTING INSTEAD THAT SIR JOSUA BE ACCREDITED AS A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRIMIN OF TONGA. HE NOTED, IN THIS CASE, SIR JOSUA WOULD NOT BE ACCORDED DIPLOMATIC STATUS OR PRIVILEGES. THE GOT'S ACTION CONTRASTS WITH WESTERN SAMOA'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE ACCREDITATION OF SIR JOSUA.

13. JAPANESE AID (UNCLASSIFIED)

- CONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN ON A FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTER WHICH IS PART OF A \$1.2 MILLION JAPANESE AID PROGRAM TO TONGA. AN IMPRESSIVE FISHERIES RESEARCH VESSEL, THE "TAKUA," HAS ARRIVED, AND WORK IS PROCEEDING ON A LABORATORY, WORKSHOP, DORMITORIES, AND OTHER FACILITIES NEAR NUKU'ALOFA.

14. GENERAL STATE OF US-TONGA RELATIONS (UNCLASSIFIED)

- I JUDGE THE GENERAL STATE OF OUR RELATIONS TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXCELLENT. THE KING, PRIMIN, AND OTHER OFFICIALS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE COOPERATIVE AND HOSPITABLE. THE PEACE

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CORPS PROGRAM APPEARS TO BE IN GOOD HANDS UNDER ITS
NEWLY ARRIVED DIRECTOR. A WELL THOUGHT OUT COUNTRY
MANAGEMENT PLAN, FOCUSED ON AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND
OTHER VILLAGE ACTIVITIES, WAS SUBMITTED TO PC/WASHINGTON
JUST AS I ARRIVED. I REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT THE SLOW
PACE OF OUR EFFORT TO DELIVER ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AID TO TONGA THROUGH AID AND PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANI-
ZATIONS (PVO). ON THE OTHER HAND, I WANT TO BE ASSURED
BEFORE OPG'S ARE SIGNED WITH PVO'S THAT THERE ARE CLEAR
UNDERSTANDINGS ON THE SOURCES OF ALL INPUTS, ESPECIALLY
LOCAL COSTS. THE INABILITY OF THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT
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TO CONTRIBUTE EVEN LIMITED AMOUNTS TO COVER LOCAL COSTS
HAS BEEN EVIDENT ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS. IT IS PARTICU-
LARLY IMPORTANT THAT THIS INITIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
EFFORT THROUGH AID BE SUCCESSFUL AS IT WILL AFFECT NOT
ONLY OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TONGA, BUT ALSO OUR
OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PACIFIC ISLAND STATES.

15. POSTSCRIPT TO PARAS 10 AND 14

- JUST AS THIS TELEGRAM WAS BEING CLEARED FOR TRANS-
MISSION, A REPLY TO REF B WAS RECEIVED. I WILL BE RESPOND-
ING AS SOON AS I HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY
STATE 101716. SELDEN

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